

FREE



MAY DAY ISSUE

RED RAG

28 APRIL-13 MAY

FORTNIGHTLY

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EVENTS 666681
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The aim of Red Rag is to provide a decent alternative coverage of local news and issues from a radical, non-aligned position; to promote subversive and creative initiatives; to provide a forum for unorthodox views, and; to allow for some sort of co-existence between a huge variety of interests. It is produced and printed by a nebulous collective and has no connection with any political party or line, nor with the University.

Alot of the material here comes from people who have nothing to do with the production process. These pieces are almost always signed in some way. The collective, as a whole, does not originate them or stand by them: it is our policy to print anything provided it isn't sexist, racist, supportive of oppressive religions, or boring. Most decisions are made on the spot by the people doing the work, or at 'editorial meetings' two days before production. These meetings are open to anyone, as is the collective itself. Watch the Events page for meetings.

Red Rag is free, read by about 4000 people, and can be picked up at any of the outlets listed inside. It is funded entirely by readers' donations, apart from the odd advert for which we charge £5 per 1/4 page. To donate some money either write a cheque to Red Rag and post it to Box 79, Acorn Bookshop, or leave money in the collecting tins in Acorn or Pop Records on Kings Road. Standing orders are even better - pick one up from Acorn or ring 374532.

If you'd like to write something for the Rag, type it to 12 cm with single line spaces, and put it in the box at Acorn before the copy deadline (which appears on the front of each issue). Submitted copy won't be altered or edited without the writer's permission, so leave name and contact number or address in case.

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NEXT COPYDATE THURSDAY 10 MAY

40 ACORN BOOKSHOP 17 CHATHAM ST READING

CITIZEN CAIN

A VERY EXCLUSIVE DEAL

The Conservative Party's love affair with privatisation - the redistribution of the taxpayers' and ratepayers' cash to private companies in return for them providing a minimum level of public service - started in Southend where David Evans' Exclusive Cleaning took over refuse collection. Profits came from a combination of reducing the number of workers and the pay and conditions of those that were left plus some sweetheart deals with the Council by which Exclusive took over the Council's vehicles cheap and had them maintained by the Council's garages. David Evans became a made man and delighted the 1981 Tory Conference with a plea to privatise everything in sight. Although he was there of course not as Chairman and Managing Director of Exclusive (now Brengreen) but as an active Conservative: he is a Tory Councillor in St Albans.

Now David Evans has come to Berkshire: one of his subsidiaries has picked up the domestic services contract at Wokingham Hospital with a loss leader bid (it was 54% of the next lowest tender), which he reckons will stand him in good stead when the real plums like the Royal Berks come along. The working party that interviewed Exclusive and that next lowest bidder was chaired by Reg Stubberfield (a Tory Councillor from Newbury) and included Rosalie Mombiot (Tory Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council) and Steve Norris (Tory County Councillor from Newbury and M.P. for Oxford East), each of whom spoke in favour of Exclusive at the Health Authority meeting that awarded the contract. Wonder whether any of them were at the 1981 Tory Conference?

P.S. Somebody from Ealing Council probably was too. Which did not prevent the Tory-controlled Council formally censuring Exclusive over their performance in their street-cleaning contract and fining them £18,000 for failures in the first month alone.

USAF BASES

It was in August 1948, according to Duncan Campbell, that Sir William Dickson, RAF Deputy Chief of Staff, proposed that the US air bases in Britain should "remain designated as Royal Air Force stations - a cosmetic disguise intended to alleviate local hostility to the presence of foreign military forces on British soil in peacetime. The proposal was accepted and, on this basis, almost all American bases in Britain are described as 'RAF' bases and have an 'RAF' commander. These 'commanders' - Squadron Leaders who are two or three ranks inferior to the US commanding officer - are in reality local liaison officers with no rights or responsibilities beyond community relations. This model was of course extended to 'RAF Greenham Common' when that was set up as a result of the 'Ambassador's Agreement' of 1950 signed by US Ambassador Lewis Douglas and the British Air Under-Secretary Aiden Crawley, an agreement that has been withheld from the Public Records Office.

MANNERS MAKETH MAYOR?

General feeling in the Labour Party is that Tory Housing Chairman Ron Jewitt's (sorry, him again) charges of lies and and scaremongering have done Labour much more good than harm: even people who don't live in Bison flats understand that the mushrooms haven't been growing on the walls there because the Labour Party's been talking about them! What the Caversham Gauleiter's charges have harmed are his chances of becoming Mayor after the elections: even if the Tories do cling onto control a number of them have already been sounding out the other parties about supporting some other Tory candidate!

A WOMAN'S PLACE?

What has upset Councillors of all three parties is that Mr Jewitt's attack went far beyond the political into the personal, singling out Labour housing spokesperson Margaret Singh for special venom. Even to the point of contrasting her unfavourably with her (male) predecessors. And the fact that she is a woman, that two of her three Labour colleagues on the Housing Committee are women, that she is the first and so far only woman member of the key Policy Committee, has probably got a lot to do with his hostility. Women in the Tory Party are to raise money and to be seen but not heard (not one of the Tory women on Reading Council has spoken at a Council meeting this year), and Ron is of course Tory machismo par excellence.

Just for the female record, by the way, both Labour and the Tories are fielding four women among their 15 candidates in the Borough elections and the Alliance two. All four Ecology candidates are male.

RED LIGHTS

One of Geoff Lowe's problems at the last Council meeting was fending off an almost interminable attack from Labour's John Silverthorne about the new traffic lights slung on a rather unsightly gantry across Castle Hill at its junction with Russell Street. Not perhaps the most obvious issue in the run-up to an election, but not only does John himself live just downwind of the bloody thing, Abbey Labour County Councillor Eric Stanford lives a few doors down and fellow Abbey Borough Councillor Tony Page lives just over the road. Which makes the Labour Party in the area particularly vulnerable to conservationist pressures!

FIRST ESTATE

The County Sheriffs who did the Government's dirty work at Greenham must find it difficult to avoid conflicts of interest when dealing with more mundane property matters. They all seem to be estate agents, including a Blandy (Blandy & Blandy, Friar Street) and a Vanderpump (Vanderpump & Wellbelove, Station Road). Cosy, ain't it?

LOWE THE WIND SOUTHERLY

One Liberal who got out early is now Deputy Leader of the Tory Group, in succession to Ron Jewitt (the same). He is Geoff Lowe who got a free transfer onto Reading Borough Council when Caversham Park Village was added to the Borough from South Oxfordshire District Council where he served as a Liberal. He didn't stick the Reading Liberal Group for long, abandoning them for the Tories when Jim Day attacked him for not voting the party whip and taking much of his ward organisation with him so that his fellow Liberal Councillor from the Village lost his seat to a Tory next time round. He's come on fast: an obscure backbencher before the 1983 election he became Chairman of the Transportation Committee in the same rebellion of Young (well, Middle-Aged) Turks that catapulted John Oliver to the dizzy heights of Chairman of Leisure and has now defeated Oliver and a couple of bitter Tory backbenchers (former Leisure Chairman Geoff Canning and former Leisure Vice-Chairman Fred Pugh) for Deputy Leader. Odd that the Tories should elect a Deputy Leader before the Borough elections, giving votes to retiring Councillors and not to those they hope to see elected, but they want to get any bruising over before the Council's AGM and the controversy surrounding Jewitt's campaign for Mayor.

KEEP IT COMING!

Citizen Cain



THE RETURN OF DIOGENES

BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING, 17th April

Well! I woke up in my tub the other day and decided to pick up my lantern and pay a visit to my old friends the Councillors... Goodness! Elections again already? It only seems like yesterday...

Let's see. There was Doris Lawrence, tripping scattily along behind the mace-bearer. It was her last meeting! And the Leader, Deryck Morton, mumbling about the Policy minutes. "I wish he'd take that sweet out of his mouth," the Press Gallery complained. Dear Ron Jewitt, everyone's favourite to be the next mayor: "If I cut my throat they still won't trust me to die." Mike Orton: "Why do we keep bringing this up? Because Labour Councillors never give up. Labour Councillors work flat out on behalf of the people we represent. And in the end we get results." And all the rest....

VERY KEEN

Labour wanted £700,000 added to the Housing budget, for instance, to allow design work to be done for the improvements to the Whitley flats. Margaret Singh complained of the "erosion of democracy" whereby it was made impossible not just to get money spent but to propose that money be spent. John Silverthorne concentrated on the need for renovations. "We in the Labour Party," he said, "are very keen on home ownership. Many of us own our own houses." He pointed out that the summer is the sensible time to do renovations. But the Tories would have none of it; and even the Liberals for some reason abstained.

ELEMENTARY

A most extraordinary defence of secrecy was made by Environment vice-chair Martin Lower, who denounced "unethical probing by the press" (the honour here belongs to the Post, not us!) not just for naming the buildings found to have Legionnaire's Disease bacteria, but for finding them out at all. "I didn't know which the buildings were," he boasted, "and neither did my chairman." Apparently, since people have to go into Reading anyway, they didn't want to know whether their air-conditioning carried the germs. To tell people was alarmist and caused "apprehension". Liberal Paddy Day agreed. She had "asked people if they wanted to know which the buildings were and not a single person said yes. They don't want the worry." Tony Markham remarked with his best medical student sneer that "anyone with the most elementary knowledge of pathology" would know that if you looked for any sort of bacteria anywhere you were bound to find it, so to find it was of no significance. Graham Rush (Labour Environment spokesman) was "absolutely astounded". Of course people should be informed. He suggested that the names had been kept quiet to avoid alarming "big business interests." Apparently (according to the Chronicle!) the buildings included the Civic Offices, British Home Stores, King's House (ICL) in King's Road, and the Prudential.

Graham Rush later launched an attack on the seeming inactivity on the matter of dogshit in the

Council's parks. Ron Williams rebuked him: "It's not often I disagree with my colleagues on the front benches," but if the Working Party had made no recommendations, that was not because it didn't care. Hamza Fuad spoke up for the dogs. "I'm going to be serious this time," he assured us. "Did you know that dogs bring people's blood pressure down? Which is more than Councillor Rush can do." Now, he wondered, could people possibly stop their dogs crapping just where they wanted to? Here Simon Coombs informed us that in America you can buy a 'Supa Dupa Poopa Scoopa'. Leisure chairman John Oliver summed up: "Cllr Rush always rushes in where angels fear to tread... Personally I like children and I like dogs. Somehow we've got to find a solution to both."

ALTERATIONS

Geoff Lowe, transportation chairman, was forced much against his will to read out a full list of the 'alterations' to the bus service on March 26th. Alterations, mind you. "There has been no cut." You see, for instance, "Running two buses over the same stretch of road is not efficient." A petition had been presented at the start of the meeting, with a small demonstration outside, for the restoration of the 18 bus service to Newtown. Meanwhile John Silverthorne had discovered a new idea: "something I noticed when I was on holiday last summer in Germany," i.e. the shared use of footpaths by cyclists.

VISION

Finally there was a Labour motion introduced with a speech from Mike Orton "to set down principles for a local housing policy in a national context. Increasingly," he said, "the resources available are being taken up with housing and flats built in the 60s and 70s," - Bison, Wates and so on and so forth. These shoddy system-built schemes are taking money away from the upkeep of older buildings. All this together with the government reducing capital expenditure limits. His motion was to use the money raised by sales of land and houses, of which he said there was £2.6million, and even in the Tories' own terms half that amount. Also the government should be asked for an increase in Reading's Housing Investment Programme allocation. The Tories were happy enough to ask for that, but they took out the bit about using money. "It's an unarguable fact," Ron Jewitt conceded, "that the money exists - the question is when we spend it." Mike Orton knew the game was up. Nevertheless: "I have a vision for the future in an ideal society," he was moved to confide, of communities with self-government. For his peroration he pointed to the smirking Tories. "Look at those faces! Another serious debate on housing policy... How much are their promises worth? That's the question I'll leave the Council with. I know my answer - I know the answer of my comrades." Comrades! The word rang in my brain. My heart swelled with something or other... That man, I reflected, back in my tub that night, could be - could be - could be the next Leader.

Diogenes

GOING OUT

MONDAY APRIL 30th

- **HEXAGON**: Sainsbury Singers Present "Kiss Me Kate". Cole Porter goodies. £3-£3.50. NUS and UB40 £2. 7.30p.m. On till Saturday.

TUESDAY MAY 1st * A mis-type worth keeping

- **HEXAGON**: Mermaid Molecule Theatre plus National Council for Civic Theatre present "The Snatch- or, The Cruel Engineer". An embittered inventor with thoughts of treason, plot and counterplot... the villain left "literally hoist(ed) by his own petard". GO, if only to find out what Bill the Bard meant by one of his oft-used expressions. £1.75. 10.30a.m. & 2.p.m. ON till Saturday.
- **Tudor Arms**: Gay Disco: free.
- **Woodley Playhouse**: Woodley Players Present "Murder for the Asking". 7.45p.m. Tickets, phone Reading 690827, 696186.
- **SHP**: Wilde Theatre: £300, a Bracknell Opera Group, present "Oklahoma". Shake a leg with Rogers & Hammerstein. 7.30p.m. On till 5th. & Modern Jazz: Joe Lee Wilson with the Errol Clarke Quartet. 8p.m. £2.50-£3. & film: "Born in Flames" 7.45p.m. On tomorrow too.

WEDNESDAY 2nd

- **Town Hall**: Lunchtime Organ Recital by Christopher Griffiths. Free. 1.10p.m.
- **Hermit Club**: Upper Deck, Duke Street. 8p.m.
- **FI**: "War Games"... teenage computer fan triggers off a nuclear alert... 8p.m. On tomorrow too. £1/£1.60.

THURSDAY 3rd

- **Progress Theatre**, till 12th: "Accidental Death of an Anarchist". Fo farce. 7.45p.m. £2.20, Concs. for NUS, UB40.
- **Reading Folk Club**, 8.15, Horse & Barge, Caversham. No details, sorry.
- **Target**: "Energy". Live band.
- **St. Lawrence's Church**, Market Place. "The Play of Adam". Mediaeval drama with music. With Reading Haydn Choir. On tomorrow too. £2, NUS £1. Tickets from Hickies, Friar St. or on door.
- **Angies Wokingham**: Nannabell Lamb.
- **Central**: Special, see elsewhere.
- **SHP**; **Studio Theatre**: "A Day in the Strife". one woman show with Denise Melior. 7.45p.m. £1.70-£1.90. On till 5th. & film "Alter Image" Free.
- **Paradise Club**: Beating Time Benefit with The Trystero System, The Myopic Muldoni Boys, The Clime, Beating Time Quartet + sounds. 8-late. £2 or £1 with a UB40. A benefit for the Beating Time Music Festival.

FRIDAY 4th

- **Wyvern Theatre**, Swindon: Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. £5-£6. I found this little nugget of info, but no more details.
- **Target**: Rock disco.
- **Tudor Arms**: Gay Disco: Free.

- **Paradise club** aka. Caribbean: something's going on but they didn't know what when I 'phoned.
- **SHP**: Recital: Parikian Fleming Roberts trio play Beethoven. 8p.m. £2.95-£3.20.
- **Angies W'ham**: Fast Buck.
- **SHP**: (again) FILM: "Underfire" with Nick Nolte 7.45p.m. "Cat People", fatuous vehicle for Nastassia Kinski's boobs. 11p.m. & Jazz Rock with "Juvessance" local band. & Course in video performance & improvisation with John Dovey. Lasts till Sunday. From 7.30p.m. £/ £30-£35.

SATURDAY 5th

- **HEX**: Free lunchtime music with "Montreux Jazzband".
- **Wyvern Theatre Swindon**: Wyvern Young Stagers are presenting something called "Tickle". £1.50.
- **Paradise**: "Hot Steel", tickets £2.50, £3 on door.
- **Target**: "Better End".
- **Angies**: Laverne Brown.
- **Central Club**: Dance, £3.
- **SHP**: Workshop, Performance art project with Paul Burwell, Artist-in-Residence. On tomorrow too. £5.50-£7.50. & films as yesterday. "Underfire" continues till Wednesday.

SUNDAY 6th

- **Butler**: Chatham St. Free jazz.
- **Jive Dive**: Treats: Kings Rd.
- **Readifolk**, Caversham Bridge Hotel, 8.15.
- **HEX**: Alan Price in concert. 8p.m. £3.50-£4.50.
- **Angies**: Red Beans and Rice.

MONDAY 7th

Get out and enjoy the fresh air. Go to the Kite Day at Greenham. Make yourself a kite with a tinfoil tail to bugger up the radar systems.

TUESDAY 8th

- **Tudor Arms**: Gay Disco: Free.

WEDNESDAY 9th

- **Watermill Theatre** Bognor nr. Newbury: "The Merchant of Venice". £4.95-£6.75. (Ouch) Half price tho' on Mon. & Tues. nights, Thurs & Sat. mats. On till June 2nd.
- **Hermit Club**, Upper Deck, Duke St.
- **Shinfield Players' Theatre**: A Musical, "Merrie England" by Edward German, 7.45p.m., £1.75, £1.50 on Wed. On till May 12th.
- **RFI**: Monty Python's "The Meaning of Life". Not the funniest but still worth seeing. 8p.m. On tomorrow too.

THURSDAY 10th

- **Reading Folk Club**, Horse & Barge, Cav'ham 8.15. Len Graham.
- **Target**: Larry Miller.
- **Sportsman** Shinfield Rd. Free music.
- **SHP**: Bracknell Literary Festival.
- **HEX**: Barbara Dickson. 7.30p.m. £5-£6.

- Angies: "The Boys from Brazil".
- Central: Special, see elsewhere.
- SHP: film: "The Quack" (club). 7.45p.m.
- & Local band "The Concept". 8.15.£1.

FRIDAY 11th

- Paradise: "Night Flight" & other bands.
- Target: Disco.
- Tudor Arms: Gay Disco: Free.
- Angies: "The K.Khan Band".
- RFT: "As You Like It". Film on the Beeb 2 production. 7.30p.m.
- SHP: Films: "Scarface" with Al Pacino. 7.45.
- "Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle" 11p.m. & Sat.
- & Local band Zenith. Jazz rock. 8.15.£1.
- & Bracknell Lit. Festival: bidding for T.V. with Ray Jenkins. 8p.m. £1.50.

SATURDAY 12th

- Paradise: details to be confirmed.
- Target: "Samurai".
- Watermill Theatre, Bagnor: Berks 20th C. Music Group presents the suite from "The Threepenny Opera" by Kurt Weill & "Facade" by Walton. Plus poems by Edith Sitwell. 2p.m., £2. NUS £1.
- Church of St. Nicholas, Harst: "Messiah" from scratch. Bring your own score if you wish to contribute your vocal talents. 7.30p.m. Tel. for details: Twyford 340017.
- HEX: Free folk at lunchtime with "Outlore". And at 7.30p.m. The Monte Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra plays Ravel, Saint-Saens & Rimsky-Korsakov. £3-£6.
- Angies: "Ruthless Loose".
- SHP: Lit. Festival: Elizabeth Jane Howard & Maggie Gee read. 3p.m.
- & Course in book binding tomorrow too.
- & Women's Video Workshop-Jini Rawlings 10a.m. -8p.m. £25-£30.
- Bow Gamelon Ensemble, Oxford Museum of Modern Art. Music and performance inspired by Indonesian Gong orchestras but featuring instruments made of scrap metal, electric motors, plus pyro-organs, etc. 8.30. £2, £1.50 concessions.

SUNDAY 13th

- Watermill Theatre: George Melly & John Chiltons Feetwarmers. 8.4-£7.50.
- Jive Dive: Treats: King St.
- Butler: Chatham St. Free jazz.
- HEX: Berkshire Young Musicians: 7.30p.m. £1-£2.5 £2.50.
- SHP: Wilde Theatre "Cosi fan Tutte". Naisaw Opera £6-£10, Yoiks.
- Angies: "Killerhertz".
- SHP again: Lit Fest.: Tony Harrison reads. 3p.m.
- Readifolk, Caversham Bridge Hotel, 8.15.

KEY

- Shinfield Players' Theatre, Whitley Wood Lane, Shinfield. Tel: Reading 883946.
- Town Hall Blagrove St.
- Watermill Theatre, nr. Newbury. Tel: (0635) 46044.
- Woodley Playhouse, Headley Rd. Woodley.
- Hexagon, Queen's Walk. Tel: 591591.
- Paradise Club, London St. Tel: 51312.
- Central Club, London St. Tel: 54421.
- SHP: South Hill Park Arts Centre. Tel: Bracknell 427272.
- Angies Wokingham: Tel. 789912 & ask for Angie or Tessa.

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CENTRAL CLUB
THURSDAYS!

5

Bulmershe College
Social Society

may day
celebration
9th May
10a.m. with videos and speakers
6 p.m. - Film - Year of Living Dangerously
8 p.m. - Speaker - Pat Wall (militant)
Disco till late
Free admission
details - phone
Bulmershe Student
Union

BIKE CO-OP

AN INTERVIEW WITH READING'S NEWEST CO-OP



The UB Cycles bike repair co-operative opened on Friday 27th April, at 67 London St. Red Rag interviewed Bill and Martin in an echoing basement...

--- How did it all begin?

--- About eighteen months ago it started with one of the women at the Centre for the Unemployed asking me to do a repair on a bike, which I did -

--- You just happened to be around and knew about bikes?

--- Yes. And then a bike that was going to be thrown down the tip was brought into the Centre, so the Management Committee was approached about funds for a few tools, paint and so forth to bring this bike up to standard. £100 was given to the project, and it snowballed from there, with donations made for repairs to bikes. We've now got a large amount of stock. Martin who worked at the Centre joined me about May last year, and he said we ought to form it into some kind of company. Then the idea of a co-operative came up.

--- I think around that time it appeared that grants of £1000 would be available from the County Council for co-operatives that were starting up. It had to be a co-op rather than a limited company. That was one of the incentives to form a co-operative, the financial one, along with the fact that it looked to me after studying it that it was potentially a viable business. Cycling is a growing market, one of the few around that is, 15% a year I think. And in Reading we are not very well equipped for cycle repair shops. Bill always had enough work in the Centre to keep going more than he wanted. He did a tremendous amount of work there. So there was obviously a demand for low-cost repairs, or in some cases more adventurous stuff, like complete re-sprays of bikes and rebuilding them. For about £50 you got a bike that was as good as new. At that time I didn't know where I was going. I'd applied for a grant to study herbal medicine, which I didn't think I'd get. I did get the grant, to study three days a week, which leaves me some time to help Bill get the business going the rest of the week.

--- When Martin got involved, we approached one or two others, for instance Dennis with his skills in engineering, and Brian Revell, because of the involvement of the Management Committee at the beginning. Brian seemed quite interested in what we were doing.

--- I knew personally someone who was a businesswoman, and I think having her name as one of the founder members helped considerably with the County Council. I think this is a problem - you've got to make yourself look viable so far as that grant's concerned. You're dealing with a group of Councillors of all political denominations, and you've got to make the application look suitable for all of them. I think getting the right group of people's very important.

--- We've found that we can work together and discuss things. Another one who's involved is partially sighted.

--- Bob. We got Bob because he's on a course, a MSC course in Birmingham, on cycle maintenance and rebuilding for the blind and poor sighted. When he's finished his training course, we'll have someone completely skilled at cycle maintenance who hopefully will become a full part of the business. I think he would probably have difficulty finding jobs in cycle shops. Again it's a local person, somebody that we know. We're down to six now, we've got six members.

--- Margaret's the other one, who's the secretary, and able to communicate with other people, I think that's essential for anybody in that kind of job... You need seven signatures to register as a co-operative. After that there's nothing stopping some resigning. I think on our one you must have four remaining. We have a number who are going to be working and a number advising, still members of the co-op for years to come we hope.

--- Because unemployed people are involved, who will very swiftly have their benefit withdrawn if they're known to be working, the idea is that for the first few months, Bill and anyone else that's unemployed will be doing purely voluntary work under the number of hours that's allowed, and then as soon as the business is making sufficient funds they will be paid a wage first of all. But one of the things I would like to see is a school leaver involved. We might be able to get MSC assistance to employ a school leaver, at 16, and then at 18 they can become a full member of the co-operative.

--- Anyone who gets involved with the co-operative, they have to do a six month period with us. You don't want to say to somebody straight away, you're a full member of the co-op, and then find once they've joined that they're like a thorn in your flesh. A six-monthly probationary period is longer than they would do in a normal firm, but the beauty of a co-op is that they become full members of the business, with equal rights and an equal share out of any profits at the end of the year.

--- The other thing is if you admit someone as a member who isn't suitable and they resign, this causes extreme problems at the moment with bank guarantees. The bank is insisting on personal guarantees from all the members. If somebody drops out it's all got to be renegotiated. So you don't want somebody who's going to come in for two months and then leave because they don't like it... The company actually registered as a co-operative last September, at which time we thought we'd very quickly be off the ground. But it was one problem after another. Finding premises was the major problem. We were lucky that the Centre let us use an upstairs storage area for all our stock, pending finding somewhere. There was no way we could take out a commercial lease, they are so ridiculously expensive in Reading, and to go to a bank and ask for £15,000, they're going to want personal guarantees to a much greater extent than anybody in the co-op could give.

--- The thing about a co-operative is it should be equal, and when you take on these guarantees - well, just take our case. Martin's got his own house, and there's me in rented accommodation and on supplementary benefit. So what have I got to lose?

--- It's something to warn people about. When you ask the bank for an overdraft facility - we didn't even want a loan, we've simply got an overdraft facility, very low, only £2,000 - they completely take away your rights at law regarding the limited company. You each have to sign a document, in the presence of a solicitor, guaranteeing that loan personally. Which breaks down the whole idea of equality, because any one individual can be got by the bank for the debts of the company. This caused us a severe political problem - indeed I myself was very reluctant to sign, on the grounds of the inequality of it. It goes against the whole concept of a co-operative. I feel it should be taken up as a national issue by the Co-operative Party and movement, because it detracts from the chance of other co-ops getting going. We just hope that in the event of anything going wrong the bank wouldn't come after us for such a small sum of money, as we're a group of genuine people.

--- What we're not after is something for nothing. We know we're taking on the loan, and we knew what we were doing. Hence the time it's taken to set up. We've gone through market research...

--- You need to do a market research project for the County Council grant anyway. Ours wasn't very extensive, but it was statistically very interesting. We did a couple of streets with over a hundred houses. That grant is not something you can just write a letter for and hope. You need to do a good business plan. We had a lot of help with that, and continuing help, from the Berkshire Enterprise Agency.

--- And the help of Councillors.

--- Councillors of all political persuasions. We had help from one of the Conservative County Councillors, who was taken by the idea and thought it would be successful. He did a lot to help us get these premises, which I think we might have had difficulty getting on our own... If it wasn't for Berkshire County Council this co-operative wouldn't have come about. We're hoping we might get some equivalent help from the Borough Council. We'll be applying for a £1,000 Urban Aid grant, on the grounds of employment creation. That could help us pay the rates for instance, which are quite high.

--- Readers can help as well, by donating any old bikes or parts, anything they don't want.

--- Financially we're starting off in a very small way. Most of our money will go on new parts, and we've virtually no money for buying in second hand bikes.

--- How did you get the building?

--- It first started when I spotted the row of outbuildings round the back, and said to Bill that wouldn't be bad for a start. He said what about the rest of it, which was empty. I didn't think there was much chance of an economic rent, but anyway Bill had a go and succeeded in getting the building.

--- It was a bit like climbing the Eiger, you could say. We're not at the top yet so we're not going down the other side.

--- We've signed a short-term lease, which is three or four months, pending the signing of a full lease. But there's a clause in the full County Council lease saying that when we vacate the building we leave it in a good state of repair, and we don't feel very inclined to sign ourselves up for about £40,000 worth of renovations. So we'll probably take out a number of short term leases.

--- What sort of state is the building in?

--- Diabolical. You couldn't do anything other than pull it down. The front is a listed building. Like the rest of London Street the front will be shored up and the rest of it knocked down. It's beyond repair. Totally rotten. Half of Reading's pigeons are residing in the loft, it's like a scene from the 'Birds'. If anyone's not a vegetarian there's plenty of pigeon pie up there.

--- You've got quite a lot of room, haven't you?

--- Three rooms. And a large cellar... There was a lot of work to do, clearing out and decorating. In the beginning though, when we first got the keys, we didn't do much. It seemed as if everything had slowed down to slow motion... In the last six or eight months we've done nothing on bikes, but mainly on getting the co-op set up.

--- What we could desperately do with is someone who could do some accounts work, voluntarily. Since I got onto my course my time's been very limited, and I'm the person who can deal with accounts and promotions and stuff. Bill's now going to be taking up most of his time doing bike repairs. There's no reason why someone good enough as a salesperson, for instance, can't build their own job with us. The market's wide open, I think, for people to promote some of the ideas we've got.

--- You're not going to get a job, so you've got to

create your own, these days. Say where a big factory's come down, maybe there's not enough work for a thousand people, but for 25 there's enough to set up as a co-op doing the same job on a much smaller scale.

--- A typical instance was the CWS printers, which I used to be employed by. When it closed down it had a million and a half pounds of business still there. Reading badly needs a Co-operative Development Agency. There's holes in the market that can only be filled in a small way, and to do that you need a C.D.A.... One of the reasons we want this co-operative to be a success is to encourage other people to start one.

--- It's something of a pioneer, isn't it? There's nothing like it in Reading.

--- No, the last one was Caversham Co., but they closed down. I think they had building problems, with the closure of such a massive building.

--- When you're starting a co-operative, think small. You're like an embryo, growing all the time.

--- That was an interesting problem. Many people encouraged us to start in a big way, saying, 'It's no good asking the bank for £2,000, ask for £5,000 minimum.' It was very difficult to resist them, and say, 'No, we're determined not to do that, we're determined to start in a small way and let it build.'

--- We don't want to set up a business and put somebody else in our place in the dole queue. I've been unemployed for three years now and know what it's like.

--- That's another thing for co-ops to consider. It's silly to go into an enterprise where the market is already covered. Take engineering. The bottom has been knocked out of engineering by this government. Anyone who starts up as a small engineering firm is foolish. People have got to look to the leisure industries which are the growth industries.

--- Unemployment is becoming now not so much unemployment as leisure time. The real hard core of unemployment is here to stay... The choice of what you do has to be essentially untested. We don't want to get everybody who does bikes in Reading on our backs. We're not there to put them on the dole queue... We've already created work in a cycle stand that a local firm is going to build for us... We've got new ideas that are going to give us work that nobody else is doing. They've got to be kept quiet for the time being!

--- Do you see yourselves as encouraging cycling?

--- Sure. My activities will probably lead towards the health and fitness side. Cycling is one of the finest forms of exercise you can get. We will be doing things along those lines in future. The other thing we want to promote is safety, probably more for next winter. A lot of kids in Reading have got diabolical bikes, particularly newspaper boys, as far as lighting is concerned. We want to push safety hard, maybe in connection with the County Council road safety people and others. Cycling accidents have gone up again. This is part of the community aspect of the co-op. We're not aiming to have a vast profit at the end of the year. We want to channel some of the profits - they won't be profits but cash turnover - into ventures in the community. We don't want a huge profit at the end of the year anyway, it's only going to be taxed. The idea is to use the money to the best benefit, and just have a small share-out.

--- What about the impact of the Reading Cycle Campaign?

--- We would like to work closely with them, and groups like that. I feel very much that in Reading cyclists are pretty hard done-by. It's not a good area for cycling, and nobody to date has really put themselves out to really make it better.

--- Other Common Market countries have got cycleways built into their system from the beginning. Here it doesn't look as if cyclists were taken into account until somebody got up to shout about it. If you shout

I'm all for it. If there were cycleways then more and more people would use cycles instead of cars. Then there is the pollution...

— A typical case where cycling is not taken into account is the new plans for the triangle by the Kennet, Rose Kiln Lane area, to put a road through and make it a leisure area. If the planners had thought about it they could have put a cycle track from Southcote across to Basingstoke Road, which would save people getting in their cars and going round in a great big circle. Well, if they had thought about anything, it would probably be a motorway across there!

— I think we've got a lot of views that need airing and talking about amongst ourselves... You know what I really want out of this? A holiday. Not an unemployed holiday, but to work for six months, have a holiday and then go back to work. That's the beauty of work, to have a holiday and then go back to work.



BUSTER BROWNTUMB'S FLOWER POWER TIPS

Plastic 'Brown Jug' carry-out draught beer containers make useful vases. Non-tippable when full - an advantage for those given to tame felines or wild parties.

KATIE BOILER'S KULINARY KORNUKOPIA

Hurried Hummours

For those with neither the time nor the patience to cook and puree chick peas. Cook pink lentils in as little salted water or vegetable bouillon as possible till soft. (Doesn't take long but make sure there is enough liquid to keep them from burning. If too wet when cooked, drain through a sieve.) Grate a large quantity of garlic and sautee in olive oil till brown and not quite crisp; for extra zing fry a few dried chillies as well but remove before continuing. Blend oil, garlic and lentils to a smooth paste with a fork and let stand for several hours for the full flavour of the garlic to soak in. (For an interesting colour variation use split green mung beans instead of pink lentils.)

OUTLETS

You may have picked this copy up from any of

Acorn Bookshop: under Chatham St carpark
Listen Records: Butts shopping centre
Harvest Wholefoods: Harris Arcade, off Friar St
Centre for the Unemployed: East St
Central Club: bottom of London St
Rag Doll: Duke St
Elephant Off-licence: Derby St
Fine Food Stores: 168 Oxford Rd
Fairview Community Centre: bottom of George St
Harrison's Newsagent: Caversham Rd
Kan's Kitchen: London Rd
Jelly's Stores: Whitley St
Number Sixty: Christchurch Green
Ken's Shop: Students' Union, Whiteknights
Tech College, library & students' common room
Pop Records: 172 Kings Rd
Rib 'n' Roast: Cemetery Junction
Mace shop: Crown Colonnade, Cemetery Junction
Continental Stores: Cemetery Junction
The Sugar Bowl: 26 Wokingham Rd
Ling's Chinese Fish Bar: Wokingham Rd
Sutherlands: 55 Erleigh Rd

TAKING YOUR DREAMS FOR REALITY

A very bad dream!

April 15th 1984, 9.30am? "I am with friends in a building resembling Shire Hall or the Civic Centre. We are drawing a map of what goes on in each room. There is a sense of danger as we explore, then we decide we have enough information and try to leave by the main staircase - a guard stops us half way down. He takes the map from us, looks at it and says: 'You can't show people this.' We try to escape down through the foyer. I am cornered in a glass-walled alcove near the entrance where a group of people are sat - sense they are judging me, though also that they don't mean to hurt me. The guard advances with the map and shows it round. I sense that they are going to operate to remove part of my brain. I awake to the feeling of blades scrabbling at my brain, but sensing that somehow I am safe."

I took this dream as a warning to be more tolerant and less judgemental!

I don't think you can ever say "that dream means this." Dreams seem to be like crystal, revealing different facets depending from which angle you look at them and where the light's coming from.

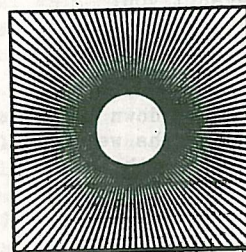
The Eloi, a so-called "primitive" tribe, educate their young in the art of dreaming, and share dreams as part of everyday life, and live harmoniously with their environment, a sharp contrast to this civilisation which depends so heavily on technology. In these times when our freedom is being steadily eaten away, I feel a need to develop more inner space, before the thought police close in for real!

I don't see dreaming as a substitute for things done in the real world, but feel it helps me as a form of self-guidance - cutting out the gurus and middle-men!

If you're interested in looking into dreams on your own, there are loads of books on the subject: "Dictionary for dreamers" is very readable, there is a section on dreams and diary techniques in "The New Diary" and I found "The Tao of Psychology - synchronicity and the Self" very helpful.

If anybody's interested in dream workshops (of a form to be decided by participants) please contact Box 3, Acorn Bookshop.

(Books mentioned above available from Acorn)



Sweet dreams!

Huw

MS. BEETROOT'S HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY

Keep an eye out, on nights before refuse collection, for the large cans in which restaurants and fast-food joints buy cooking oil. With the tops removed (an ordinary tin opener won't work) they make useful waste bins, etc. Bonus: by careful draining you may be able to salvage as much as half a pint or more of oil. (The Wimpy Bar in West Street uses Wesson Oil.)

COMMUNITY CARE

FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PEOPLE

I work on a project at Borocourt Hospital which is part of the current moves within the West Berkshire Health Authority towards care in the community.

In particular we are involved in identifying and training people who have lived in this large hospital for the mentally handicapped for many years, for life in the community, in Reading, in what are called group homes. Group homes are ordinary houses where a group of five or six mentally handicapped people live, contributing their own special skills to the group as a whole.

Now, 'community care' has its critics; some people feel that the government reckon it to be a 'cheap option' and that pushing people into houses in Reading is not caring. I might agree with this - I feel that community care is much more than this, and that to work successfully it needs to be a properly considered and developed network of services, supports and facilities, real community care is caring by the community, which consists of ordinary individuals and not just professionals who are paid to care.

Our next group home is being provided by a housing association in the Whitley/Christchurch/University area of Reading. There will be a number of professionals involved in it - we are already training and preparing six people for the move. But we need volunteers who live locally and are prepared to be representatives of the community in two ways: either befriend the people who live there, involving them in your lives, helping them out with any small worries or problems they may have; or to have a more 'organising' role of collecting rent etc.

We are having a meeting on 13th. May at 3.00pm. (that's a Sunday) at Borocourt Hospital in the Occupational Therapy Dept., where anyone interested can meet the staff and, more importantly, the residents involved, and find out a bit more about it - there is no obligation. There is a bus service to Borocourt (Alder Valley) but it's quite expensive. If anyone is interested but has no transport, please ring me either at home on Rdg 599995 or at work on 92 680541 ext. 248 and leave a message if I'm not around.

Do consider it - it's very rewarding and good fun - you will get a lot out of it as well.

Sue Cockett

SMALL ADS

- Three piece suite (old but in reasonable condition) and cast iron fireplace (bedroom size) - FREE to good home. Phone 64246 evenings.
- Wanted for Newtown Community Press
Old cotton shirts or rags for cleaning silkscreens.
Ring Clive, 666324
- If your dietary ideology allows, keep an eye on the "Cheese Ends" tray at County Delicacies in St. Mary's Butts (The wurst shop in Reading). Sometimes nothing but Cheddar, Cheddar and more Cheddar to gorge yourself on, but frequently much more exotic goodies, all at a flat price of (currently) £1 a pound. Hard to find even the nothingest Irish or New Zealand soap for that price anywhere else.

★
ASTONISHING
★
★
"Beating Time"
★
BENEFIT

with
★ The Trystero System

★ THE CLIME ★
★ The Myopic Muldoni Boys ★
★ "Beating Time" quartet ★
★ SOUNDS ★

at the Paradise Club
★ Thursday May 3rd ★
Bands from 9:30
Tickets £2, UB40 £1
★ ★

RED RAG desperately needs a regular Eventsperson to perform the invaluable task of compiling the only almost-complete fortnightly guide to 99% alternatively pure agitprop and other goings-on in and around Reading. Job involves trying to bully organizers into phoning you (to save £££ppp), checking out the Library and other relevant information sources, trying to make as much sense as possible out of the information and hopefully typing it all up ready for the overworked production team (or at least writing it legibly enough for someone else to type). Ring 666681 or 666324. YOU could be the first in your street to know what's really happening.

TELL ME WHO YOU ARE

Writing about the getting-it-together stage of my own alcoholism I described the collective sharing of recovery as the most liberating, radicalizing experience of my life. That, as I said, is another story and I'm not going to tell it here; not yet.

Part of that story, however, and a very important part has been learning to tell you who I am. Not You-with-a-capital-Y: Right-on, Radical Alternative, liberated You (aren't you?). All of you out there. And you too, Love, you here closest beside me for so long: telling you has been hardest of all.

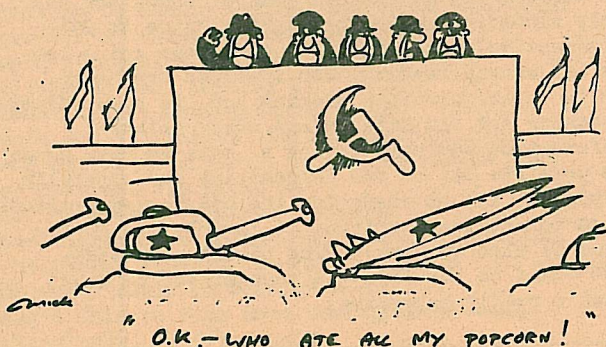
It wasn't easy; not at first. For me, for most of us - for all of us? - to be really straight, to be truly up front about ourselves, is terrifying - too terrifying almost to even imagine. Terra Incognita. Ultima Thule. The place where the map runs out, marked only "Heere theyre bee Dragons. Until we finally summon up the courage to venture over the edge and discover that the dragons are mostly painted paper ones with ourselves inside making them look ferocious.

At first for me to open my mouth and say nothing more than "I'm Dave and I'm an alcoholic" was almost more than I could manage. But because others could say it - "I'm Mick and I'm an alcoholic"; "I'm Ray and I'm an alcoholic"; "I'm Lynda and I'm an alcoholic"; "I'm Anna and I'm an alcoholic", one after the other around the room - I could say it: "I'm Dave and I'm an alcoholic". They were telling me something about themselves, one very central thing about who they were. So I could tell them something, just that one single thing at first, about myself. It was the first word in starting to tell myself who I am.

I wrote "A nice respectable addiction" partly in answer to a not-very-pseudonymous "L" who regretted that people wrote a lot in Red Rag about their public concerns but next to nothing about what concerned them deeply on a personal, individual level. Partly because after reading the "Survival" section of Reading between the lines I was left with the feeling that either nobody in our town this side of the SGP had a drink problem or, more likely, that the conspiracy of silence and/or ignorance is just as strong in Alternative Reading as it is with "Them". But mostly I wrote it because being up front about it is something I need to do for my own sake, to reclaim my own life.

The feedback has been warm and wonderful: part of who I am has had meaning for some of you and that's what it's about. But who you are has to be meaningful for me too. I want - I need - to know what it's like to be you, whoever you are. What does it mean to live with diabetes or schizophrenia? To get to grips with a claustrophobic personal relationship? To be unable to form relationships at all? I need you to tell me what it means to be something or someone I'm not. Or to be somewhere that I'm still struggling to get out of. Please: tell me who you are.

With love, Dave



LETTERS

Dear Red Rag,

I have only just become acquainted with your great free paper, but since reading it I have read relatively little about drug addiction and the shocking lack of treatment anyone seeking help can receive in this area.

I speak from experience as I was a heroin addict for some four years, and only recently have I conquered this dreadful habit. How I became involved in the first place is a long and sorrowful story, which I don't think I should even begin to go into now.

There are two points I would like to make. The first is that anyone in the Reading area who finds themselves unable to cope without a fix can't get any treatment from a local doctor, mainly because the Drug Squad has circulated a list of 'junkies' to doctors and told them to phone them immediately any of these people appear in their waiting rooms. I know this as true because one doctor showed me the list; fortunately he did not phone the Old Bill.

Therefore the only alternative is to seek a private doctor, who mainly reside in Harley Street, London, etc. I had to resort to this way of getting a legal scrip, but it is very expensive. I was paying the doctor £30 a week, plus £30 to get the scrip out of the chemist. This was when I was out of work so you can imagine how I had to make ends meet.

All I wish is a change in attitude by local doctors, not to give out dangerous drugs willy-nilly but to show some sympathy toward the (addicted) patient's problems.

Secondly, I know of no voluntary help group dealing with this problem, and I believe if such a group were to exist locally it could save a lot of young people before it became too late.

In writing this letter I in no way knock the fine job the Ley Community and other clinics are doing, but most junkies I know are very reluctant to go there because the rules are very strict and visitors are only rarely allowed in, even family.

If a group were set up I would be more than willing to attend and try to help others with their problem any way I could - constructively of course.

I am 24 years old, in full employment, married and we are expecting a baby in May.

Yours hopefully,
Alan

Thanks for being up-front about a serious problem. There is a self-help organization for addicts, Narcotics Anonymous, modelled on Alcoholics Anonymous. NA has been of tremendous help to men and women addicted to heroin and other 'street' drugs, and also those hooked on carelessly prescribed legit drugs. There isn't so far as I know an NA group closer than London: why not start one? Telephone contact number is 01 871 0505 (24 hour answering service) or write to PO Box 246, London SW10.

Dave

Dear Red Rag,

Citizen Cain seems particularly adept at blowing Pete Ruhemann's horn. Wonder why? A virtuoso divertimento between acts of verbal violence against Ron Jewitt and righteous commentary on George Robinson's drinking habits, perhaps - or is it just because it's spring and the narcissi are in full bloom?

Abel Boddey

"Beating Time"

Reading's very own DIY Free Music Festival is beginning to take something approaching shape. It's all happening from Monday May 14 to Saturday May 19 at Reading Centre for the Unemployed, 1 pm onward. So far the programme looks something like this - subject to change and/or confirmation. Final (?) details in the next Rag.

MONDAY 14 Afternoon: Singing workshop and session. Percussion workshop with Paul Burwell. One-hour wonders (these are opportunities for spur-of-the-moment groups to get something together and hopefully perform it). **Evening:** The explosive Paul Burwell in performance.

TUESDAY 15 Afternoon: Folk workshop. Flamenco guitar with Pete Hall. "Put your show on the road" - busking workshop with Fiddler Dave. One hour wonders. **Evening:** open folk session with Fiddler Dave, Paul Hancock and friends.

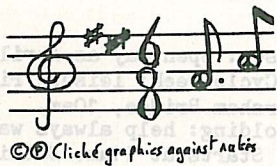
WEDNESDAY 16 Afternoon: Blues guitar - talk and workshop with Mike Cooper and Mike Messer. Blues harmonica. Busking "feedback" session (after lunchtime "practical" on the street). One hour wonders. **Evening:** Jazz Faculty in session.

THURSDAY 17 Afternoon: Reggae workshop with Dave Brewster and friends. One hour wonders. **Teatime:** West Indian Women's Circle steel band. **Evening:** Katesgrove Steel Band; open reggae session.

FRIDAY 18 Afternoon: Electric and electronic improvisation. Songwriting workshop with John Delahunty. **Teatime:** "The Willowdale Handcar" - a talking static silent movie with music. **Evening:** Grand Beating Time Cabaret featuring Practically Everybody and friends.

SATURDAY 19 Beating Time comes out in the open and takes to the streets. Procession, open-air happenings in the town centre.

The organizers need your help: this is a festival for and by Us - not the unmentionable Them. Still needed are loan or cheap hire of PA and any available musical instruments, especially an upright piano in some semblance of tune. Also needed: willing and able bodies to help with the donkey work. See Laura, Tim or Dave at the Centre, Wednesdays 2.30 to 4.30, or drop us a note.



© Clicked graphics against Nazis

Reading Between the Lines

We still have around 250 copies of this unique and quite indispensable guide to Reading. You can buy this at Acorn, Bookends in Duke St, or even the Pan bookshop in the Butts. W.H. Smith's (!) took twenty copies, but these have not been seen on the bookshelves... Anyway, we want ideas for how to shift the rest! Anybody got any? Anybody want some copies to try selling in their pub?? Ring James on 666681.

Whoops!

In the Empty House Survey article in the last Rag, the scheme involving empty properties owned by Wimpey, took place in Bromley, not Brent as stated. Sorry about that!

Procrastinate now! Tomorrow may be too late.

Helpful hint

Burnt toast: what to do about it. So long as you do more than one piece - rub them against each other! Works wonders, no mess.

REGULAR EVENTS

- **Photography:** sessions every Tuesday (10-12, 1-3) at Centre for the Jobfree, East St
- **Housing and Welfare Rights:** Thursday evenings, Community House, Cumberland Rd.
- **Reading Gay Switchboard:** Tues & Fri, 8-10pm. 597269
- **Mini-market:** Thurs 9-1, St Mary's House, Chain St
- **Women's Centre:** open Tues 10-2, Wed 10-2, Sat 11-3. All women and kids welcome. Pregnancy testing Tues 7-9, Bring urine sample from first
- **Incest Survivors Group:** meets regularly. Write c/o Rape Crisis Line, 17 Chatham St, for details.
- **Anarchists:** meet every Monday. Details via Box 19, Acorn Bookshop. Autonomists contact via the anarchists.
- **Peace Pledge Union:** meets monthly, always active. Contact 588459, 868384, or Box 10, Acorn.
- **Ecology Party:** meets 1st and 3rd Mon of month at 25 de Beauvoir Rd and 38 Long Barn Lane respectively. Contact Maria 663195.
- **Socialist Workers' Party:** meet every Weds, Red Lion, Southampton St, 8pm.
- **Labour History Group:** meets monthly at Red Lion. Contact Breda 584558 or Mike 665478 for details.
- **Vegans:** 1st Sun of month. 1 Orrin Close, Tilehurst at 2pm. Contact Liz and Steve Shiner 21651
- **Women's Peace Group:** 1st Mon of month at Women's Centre. Contact Rheinhold 662873.
- **Amnesty:** 2nd Thurs of month. St Mary's Centre, Chain St. Contact Jean 472598.
- **History of Reading Soc:** 3rd Tues of month, Abbey Gateway
- **Berks Humanists:** meet 2nd Fri of month Oct-May at 8pm. Friends' Meeting House, Church St. Details Crowthorne 774871.
- **Cyclists Touring Club:** outings Sun 9.15 from Caversham Bridge or Henley. Richard 50949
- **Wednesday is Women's Day** at Centre for the Jobfree, East St. Coffee, advice, courses, etc, from 10-30.
- **Silkscreen Workshops:** at Newtown Community House, 117 Cumberland Rd. Details Clive 666324.
- **Practi 1 Paradise Club:** Women's Centre, abbey St. Workshops, self-defence, keep fit... and fun. Suns, 2-6
- **Reading Recreation Art Centres:** Painting for Pleasure at Town Hall. Mon 7-9, Tues 10-12. Details 55911 or 861289.
- **Cruelty-free toiletries:** market stall every Sat behind Tesco's, Butts Centre.
- **National Council for Civil Liberties:** 2nd Mon of month. St Mary's Centre, Chain St. Contact Paul 861582.
- **Reading Cycle Campaign:** meets monthly at the Rising Sun, 1st Mon of month. For details ring 483181 or 64667.
- **Reading Birth Centre:** 3rd Tues of month for food and chat. Ring 61330 for venue.
- **Reading Organisation for Animal Rights (ROAR):** 1st Tues of month at The Crown, Crown St. Contact Alan 477790.

LATECOMERS

- Wed 2
- East Reading CND meeting at 71 Hamilton Road. 8pm.
- Saturday 12
- Student Community Action Group benefit: Here and Now band plus The Magic Mushroom Band and The Soft Dogs. 7.30 til late. Reading University Main Hall. Tickets: £2/£1.50 in advance from Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham St. or NUS office NUS CARD HOLDERS £2.50 on the night.
- Most of the proceeds for a holiday for the mentally and physically handicapped.
- Monday 14
- Caversham group, Berks. anti-Nuclear Campaign: Mtg 8pm. 70 St. Peters Avenue.
- Pangbourne Peace Group: Meeting on 'Peace and Capitalism' 1 Short St. (off Horsehoe Rd.) 8pm.
- Friday 18
- Henley Peace Group: showing of the film 'Atomic Cafe' South Oxon Tech, Greys Road, Henley.

EVENTS

29 April to 19 May
for regular events, see previous page

Sunday April 29

- Coley Park Borough Council Nursery garden Open Day. Wensley Rd. 2.30-6. Free

Monday 30

- Reading Cycle Group: meeting to plan for National Cycle Week, May 12-19. Rising Sun, 8pm.

Tuesday May 1

- Reading Organisation for Animal Rights: meeting to plan for the national 'Week of Action', May 5-12, for animal rights. 'If any interested party wants to go to one ROAR meeting, then the one on the first of May is the one to go to'. Back room of the Crown, Crown St, 8pm.

Wednesday 2

- Veggie Dining Cooks' Meeting: to plan for Friady. At Ant's, 14 de Beauvoir Rd, 7.30.

Thursday 3

- War Games film: see Going Out
- Women and Photography course starts. Learn to print and develop photos; women in photos and women photographers. Reading Centre for the Jobfree, 7.30. £1.20 per session (50p unwaged).
- World Development Movement meeting: 'European Elections - let's make development an issue', with 'our' candidates Robert Bradrock (lib) and Baroness Elles (Con). St Mary's Centre, the Butts, 7.45.

Friday 4

- Veggie Dining: Another grand extravaganza of home cooking and music. At Reading's most exclusive venue - Fairview Community Centre, George St. £2 waged or £1 unwaged; tickets from Acorn.

Saturday 5

- SWAG waste paper collection. Skips at Superkey, Palmer Park, Northumberland Ave, St Martin's Precinct, Recreation Rd and Gt Knolly's St. 8.30-12.30. Every first Saturday of the month.

Sunday 6

- Vegans: talk by Sally Blades, local acupuncturist. 1 Orrin Close, Tilehurst, 2.45
- Games Conspiracy - come and play games in the park - again. Bring frisbees, skipping ropes, but mainly yourselves. 2pm outside adventure playground, Palmer Pk

Monday 7

Nothing doing

Tuesday 8

- Ending the Arms Race: debate between Bruce Kent and Julian Critchley. Old Town Hall, 7.45

Wednesday 9

- Civic Society: illustrated lecture by John Punter - a summary of the past year's developments in Reading with an insight into the next. Vachel Room, the Hexagon, 8pm.

Thursday 10

- PPU meeting at 42 Gosbrook Road. Pacifist group with an @. 8pm.
- Red Rag copy deadline and editorial meeting to sort out the next issue. If you'd like to help, please leave a message for Kevin on 666681. Typing after the meeting and on Friday. Layout and paste-up on Saturday. Folding and labelling on Sunday.

Are you upset by pornography, angry about videos, annoyed by the new legislation that does not recognise rape within marriage? If you want to act rather than quietly boil, come to a meeting on May 10, 8pm, at the Womens Centre to find out what you can do as a member of Reading Rape Crisis Collective. For more information, transport or babysitting, call Lesley on 68972

Friday 11

- History Association, Reading Branch: 'King and courtier in the age of Henry 8' by Dr D Starkey. Bulmershe College, 7.30. Details from M Lockey, 12 Amity St, 664309.
- Berks Humanists: last meeting of the season. Friends welcome. 8.10.

Saturday 12

- National Cycle Week to 19 May. Cycle maintenance sessions at the Centre for the Jobfree. Contact there.
- Asian Art Group: see Going Out
- Work-in: by Berks Family History Society. Friends' Meeting House, Church St, 10-5pm. Details from Mrs Longhurst 873888.
- The Wool Trade in Berkshire: summer conference of Berks Local History Association. Shaw House School, Church Rd, Shaw, Newbury. Bookings (£6.75 non-members) c/o Reg Stevenson, 1a Westlands Ave, Huntercombe, Slough
- Yoga workshop with Angela Thompson. Southlands School, 10-4. £3 to non-members of Reading Yoga Centre. Registration: Pat Condron, 14 Pine Drive, Eversley.
- Animal Rights: demo in London. Meet up 10.30 outside Reading Station.

Sunday 13

- Coley Nursey: open day as April 29
- National Cycle Week: leisure ride (25 miles) starts from Caversham Bridge, 10am.
- Red Rag folding: help always wanted - work off that hangover. Starts at 11am. Details 666681.

Monday 14

- NCCL: Civil liberties in the nuclear state. St Mary's Centre, Butts. 8-10pm.
- National Cycle Week: commuter race. 3 commuters, one on a bike, one in a bus and one in a car, will race from Suttons Seeds roundabout to the town centre in the morning rush hour.

Tuesday 15

- Reading Birth Centre: meet at 1pm at 20 Bulmershe Rd. Bring a contribution to lunch.
- Human World - Animal World: talk arranged by Reading Bahai Faith. AUEW Hall, 121 Oxford Rd, 8pm. Details 590233
- National Cycle Week: articles in the (whisper it softly) Evening Post all week by (!) members of the Reading Cycle Campaign.

Saturday 19

- Berks Organic Gardeners: Plant Sale. 14 Copse Avenue, off Micklands Rd, off Henley Rd (no. 25 bus). 2.30.
- May Tree Fair (also on 20th): Music, dancing, players, craft, horses, food, ale, children's world, all manner of wonders. In Forestry Commission woods, 5m east of Thetford, Norfolk, where Peddars Way crosses A1066. £2.50 per day (£1 UB40/OAP). Camping £1. Proceeds to Green Deserts

DARIO FO'S OUTRAGEOUS FARCE

+ ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF AN ANARCHIST +



**Progress
Theatre**

The Mount, off Christchurch Road, Reading

Box Office: Reading 477594

Tickets £2.20 + Reductions (£1.80)

+MAY 3RD TO 12TH AT 7.45PM+

WARNING: THIS PLAY CONTAINS LANGUAGE WHICH MAY CAUSE OFFENCE

Tel: Reading 477594